NCA
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U.S. SCIENTISTS PROTEST ORLOV TRIAL

ANNCR:

AMERICAN SCIENTISTS ARE PROTESTING WITH WORDS AND DEEDS THE TRIAL AND SENTENCING OF SOVIET PHYSICIST YURI ORLOV BY A MOSCOW COURT. VOA SCIENCE EDITOR LASZLO DOSA PREPARED THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

A JOINT AMERICAN-SOVIET SYMPOSIUM ON CONDENSED MATTER THEORY THAT WAS SCHEDULED TO OPEN MONDAY (MAY 22) IN MOSCOW, DID NOT TAKE PLACE. IT WAS CANCELLED FOLLOWING THE DECISION OF ITS NINETEEN AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS NOT TO GO TO MOSCOW. AS A MESSAGE FROM THE AMERICAN PHYSICISTS TO THEIR SOVIET HOSTS SAID, THEY FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF THEIR FELLOW PHYSICISTS, AND ARE "DISTRESSED BY THE LACK OF OPENNESS IN ORLOV'S TRIAL AND THE SEVERITY OF HIS PUNISHMENT." DOCTOR ORLOV WAS TRIED AND CONDEMNED FOR HIS ROLE IN MONITORING SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH THE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS.

DOCTOR WILLIAM BRINKMAN, CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION TOLD VOA IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW THAT MEMBERS OF HIS GROUP DECIDED UPON HEARING OF ORLOV'S CONVICTION THAT THEY WOULD NOT GO TO THE SOVIET UNION AT THIS TIME. BUT THE AMERICAN SCIENTIST ALSO STRESSED THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES DO NOT WANT TO CUT OFF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET SCIENTISTS, MANY OF WHOM ARE THEIR GOOD FRIENDS.

ONE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS DECISION WILL BE TO REDUCE THE EXCHANGE OF AMERICAN AND SOVIET SCIENTISTS AT THIS TIME. BUT DOCTOR BRINKMAN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THIS WILL MAKE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AWARE OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS' FEELINGS ABOUT

THESE THINGS AND THE CANCELLATION OF THE TRIP TO MOSCOW "MAY BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGES WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS."

SIMILAR SENTIMENTS WERE EXPRESSED BY HARVARD UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR NICOLAAS BLOEMBERGEN, WHO ALSO CANCELLED A VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION. AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF THE U.S. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, DOCTOR BLOEMBERGEN EXPLAINED HIS DECISION IN A LETTER TO PRESIDENT ALEXSANDROV OF THE SOVIET ACADEMY OF SCIENCES. THE AMERICAN SCIENTIST SAID THAT THE ORLOV TRIAL AND SENTENCING "DELIBERATELY DEFIES AND VIOLATES THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS." AND HE ADDED THAT THE CONCERN OF WESTERN SCIENTISTS ABOUT THE FATE OF ORLOV, AS WELL AS OTHER DISSIDENT SCIENTISTS, SUCH AS GINSBERG AND SHARANSKY, HAS BEEN EXPRESSED REPEATEDLY DURING THE PAST YEAR THROUGH OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE CHANNELS.

PROFESSOR BLOEMBERGEN FURTHER SAID SAID IN HIS LETTER: "WHILE I REALIZE THAT THE SOVIET ACADEMY OF SCIENCES HAS NO POLITICAL CONTROL OVER THESE MATTERS, THE COMPLETE SILENCE AND LACK OF RESPONSE FROM YOUR OFFICE TO EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM WESTERN SCIENTISTS HAS BEEN CONSPICUOUS." HE URGED THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOVIET ACADEMY OF SCIENCES TO GIVE THESE MATTERS MOST SERIOUS ATTENTION BECAUSE THE CLOSED TRIAL OF ORLOV HAS DEALT A SERIOUS BLOW TO THE COURSE OF FREE SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMICIAN CONCLUDED: "IF THE TRIALS OF GINSBERG AND SHARANSKY ARE CONDUCTED IN A SIMILAR MANNER, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN OUR ACADEMIES WILL BE FURTHER JEOPARDIZED. UNDER THE PRESENT PREVALING CIRCUMSTANCES" -- SAID PROFESSOR BLOEMBERGEN -- "I DO NOT WISH TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES."

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